

THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 14, 1847.

Attention is directed to a series of articles, entitled, *Portraits for the People*, the first of which is given in to-day's Era. They are from the pen of a citizen of the District.

THE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

It is doubtful whether the use of machinery in manufacturing is destined to work greater changes in the social system than the invention of the railroad and locomotive. Both save time, labor, and capital; both stimulate the capabilities of a country, augmenting its wealth and commerce; but while many it is still an undetermined question whether machinery, in its extensive substitution of labor, may not, in the existing condition of society, have done real injury to the working classes; there can be no question at all concerning the vast benefits conferred upon them by the railroad. The poor man now, in obedience to the claims of relationship, or in quest of employment or pleasure, may take a journey, the expenses of which, a few years ago, he could not have encountered. The locomotive adds to his comforts, and widens the range of his employment.

In this country especially, the moral influences of this new mode of intercommunication must be incalculable. It is precisely adapted to correct the evil growing out of the nomadic habits of large portions of our population. The energies of the American people, unrepressed by antiquated institutions, and stimulated to the highest degree by the vast unknown regions continually tempting them to explore their treasures, have given a missionary character to the nation. Families are constantly breaking up, the different members taking the most diverse routes, almost losing sight or sound of each other in the intervening distances. Old landmarks are swept away. No time is allowed for the growth of a reverence for what is ancient and venerable. Brothers and sisters plunge into separate solitudes and meet again, perhaps, only by accident, and after time has changed them, that they can scarcely recognize each other.

The tendency of this state of things is, to impair the conservative power of the family institution, to loosen the ties of friendship, to isolate the individual, and thus weaken the bonds which bind society together.

Could anything, then, be more admirably adapted to counteract this evil than the RAILWAY? The locomotive is a space-annihilator—a promoter of good neighborhood, brotherly love, social unity. It establishes intimate communications between settlements which, a few years ago, hardly knew of each other's existence. It brings within two or three days' travel friends and relatives who, even while separated by almost impassable distances, were separated by almost impassable distances. It creates mutual interests and dependencies, spreading like a closely wrought network over the country; it rapidly diffuses commercial intelligence, common ideas, common sentiments, so that the unity of national character and the power of national sympathies are maintained; and the squatter on the borders of civilization feels that he has an equal interest with the denizen of the thronged city in the fame and fortunes of the republic.

The progress of railroads in this country has been wonderful. Quite recently we had occasion to investigate certain statistics in relation to them, in Europe and the United States. We found that towards the close of the year 1843, the total length of railway in the latter was more than five thousand miles; in Great Britain, twenty-one hundred; in all Europe, including Great Britain, about the same as in the United States alone. In England, capital is abundant, wages low, and her commerce larger than that of any other country.

In Belgium, France, Austria, &c., severally, there is unity of interest, and the sovereign power has contributed largely to sustain this kind of enterprise. In the United States capital is limited, labor scarce, the country new and sparsely settled. Besides, there are serious internal improvements, the States are independent of each other, there being no central government with power to command, or in any way induce harmony of effort or plan; and yet they have an extent of railroad three thousand miles greater than the total route in Great Britain. The fact shows at once the energy of the American people, and the efficiency of their institutions.

A writer in the Edinburgh Quarterly attempts to explain this remarkable fact by reference to the nature of the country, the mode of constructing our railways, and the manner of working them. The country over which they run is generally level; the neighboring forests afford timber almost for the mere cost of felling; the bridges are strong, but not elegant; where rivers intersect the lines, they are made a part of them, the vans containing the baggage being so arranged on the steamboat as to be rolled upon the track, and vice versa; the American railways are generally single lines, except where the increased travel and traffic require double lines; in laying them the custom of avoiding all curves except those of a large radius is disregarded; the gradients are not restricted to the same low limits as in other countries; the engines are powerfully built, but little is expended in show; finally, great economy is observed in the structure of the cars, although it is admitted that they are far superior to any of the second class in England.

The writer to whom we have referred seems to have inferred that we have respecting almost every item of interest in our railroads in this country and in Europe. In our next number we shall take the liberty of condensing a portion of the highly interesting facts he has collected.

We perceive that a writer in the American Review for November has constructed an article on this subject, made up chiefly from the statements of the Edinburgh writer, who receives, however, no credit for them.

THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS.

A writer in the Westminster Review for September predicts in gloomy terms a great variety of beneficial results to England from the repeal of the corn laws. In many respects, doubtless, he will prove a true prophet, but he is extravagant in some of his views. He assumes that agriculture will be so improved, and so much of the waste or ill-farmed land be brought under skilful cultivation, that the productions of England will be doubled, if not trebled; so that from being an importing, she would become an exporting country. This is visionary. The best lands of England have been brought under cultivation. The poor lands, now ill-farmed, will not reward industry so well as it will be rewarded by being diverted to manufacture, which will undoubtedly be stimulated by the augmented trade resulting from the corn law repeal—thus deriving, to some extent, labor and capital from agriculture. Besides, looking over the statistics of the wheat trade in England for the last century and a half, it will be seen that once she exported largely; then the exportation steadily diminished, till exports and imports about balanced each other. In a little while, importation exceeded exportation; the latter gradually decreased; the former uniformly increased, and for the last quarter of a century has been continually augmenting, amid all vicissitudes of seasons and changes of policy.

The same writer anticipates the most happy influences on the foreign relations of Britain from the late radical change in her commercial policy. Peace, he says, will become permanent, because war will be too reciprocally and tremendously mischievous to be thought of; and, he adds, "America and Russia will work for us and assist us, as much as they belonged to us, and injury to us will be dreaded by them as much as by injury inflicted on themselves."

This is too narrow an exhibition of the benefits of free commerce. America and Russia will undoubtedly work for England; but, in so doing, they will be working for themselves; and England, in her turn, will be working for them; and, in so doing, for herself. The benefits will be reciprocal, the dependence mutual.

THE QUESTION BEFORE CONGRESS.

The great question before Congress is, whether the system of slavery shall be extended to any new territory, which may have lately been or may hereafter be acquired.

The same question was raised during the struggle for and against the annexation of Texas, and then decided in the affirmative, on the ground that slavery was already existing in that territory.

The question now agitated in Congress springs necessarily out of the Mexican war, the original and chief responsibility of which rests upon the slaveholders. The blame of its agitation, therefore, if blame is to be imputed at all, lies at their door.

Having themselves opened the subject, they have no right to resist or attempt to restrain or censure the discussion of it. There should be a fair and candid presentation of views on both sides. The representatives of a free people ought to show themselves capable of deliberating upon so grave a question without heat or prejudice. The spirit of sectionalism should be quenched; party divisions should cease. The question is one, not of sections or parties, but of country. It is really not a question of power between the different States, but of principle.

All this, however, seems to have been lost sight of during the recent debates in Congress. Some from the South have treated the subject as if it were to be disposed of by stormy declamation.

Some from the North have expressed their views upon it, as if there were no higher authority to be appealed to than the interests of their party, or the wishes of their constituency. These have been threats of disunion on one side, bitter taunts on the other.

The comprehensive views of the statesman, the calmness of the philosopher, the devotion of the patriot, have rarely been displayed.

Allusions to the acts of wise men who framed the Federal Constitution have been frequent; but the inference, therefore, is plain: the power to abolish or create slavery has never been delegated to Congress; if it exist at all, it belongs exclusively to the States, or people thereof. Their power extends to the system, so far as it lies within their bounds, respectively.

Let us apply these doctrines. By a decree proclaimed by the President of the United Mexican States, September 15th, 1839, it was declared—

"1. That slavery be exterminated in the republic."

"2. Consequently those are free who, to this day,

have been looked upon as slaves."

By this decree, freedom became the universal law in the Mexican territory.

In 1846, large portions of this territory fall by conquest, under the power of the United States. Possession is temporary. No power is claimed to establish any other government in them than such as may be necessary for the protection of the rights of the inhabitants *under their own laws*. One of these laws is the law of personal liberty—the prohibition of slavery. How, then, can slavery be introduced? It cannot be done; there is no power anywhere to do it.

But suppose, by treaty with Mexico, American possession of these territories be ratified, so as to become permanent? Then, say Southern politicians, you must share the soil between slavery and liberty: if you do not, you violate the principles of the Constitution.

We have already demonstrated that those compromises confer no right, impose no duty, to establish, extend, or abolish slavery. If they do point out the particular clause, No, the very Southern politicians demand would be itself a gross violation of the Constitution. These territories come under the jurisdiction of the General Government as free. Slavery cannot become legal there, unless established by positive law.

What is constitutional? The members of Congress from the Slave States have assumed, again and again, that the exclusion of slavery from New Territories, acquired or to be acquired by the United States, would be a violation of the Federal Constitution. The nature and law of slavery they have overlooked.

The natural state of man is freedom. The common sense of mankind, embodied in our Declaration of Independence, asserts that the right to liberty, to free action, free thought, free utterance—is inherent in human nature, inalienable, and beyond, not to one man, one class, or one country, but to all men, everywhere.

Slavery is *fore*, undisguised, or under the form of law, used to prevent the exercise of his right. It cannot take it away, it cannot alienate what is inalienable, but it can prevent and prevent its exercise. Let the subject of it, in any way, pass from under its pressure, and he rises at once, *by that act*, to the status of a free man; he is restored at once, *by that act*, without the interposition of positive law; to his natural condition of freedom.

Slavery, therefore, from its very nature, is and must be local or municipal. It can have no extra-territorial force, because it is the product solely of local law, and can be maintained only by local law.

The sovereignty of a State is supreme upon its own territory. Its laws have *force* and effect only within its own limits. The peculiar privileges of mankind depend alone upon the laws of the State which recognizes them. They do not extend beyond its bounds: the poor peasant and the proud noble who come to our shores, in the eye of our institutions, are simply sea, standing on a footing of perfect equality; the inequality of their privileges ceased when they passed the boundaries of the State which created the difference of caste.

Slavery is also the creature of local law. The moment the master and slave pass beyond the limits of the State which gives one the unnatural power to prevent in the other the exercise of the right of liberty, that act restores them to perfect equality. Slavery has no extra-territorial force.

This principle was recognised by the framers of the Federal Constitution. Under the Confederacy, no provision existed for the recapture of slaves escaping from one State into another; so that when a slave fled out of the State in which he bound to a master, he was free. The framers of the Constitution therefore incorporated a positive provision in that instrument, that no person held to labor or service in one State, engaging another, should be discharged from such service, but should be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor might be due. The incorporation of such a provision is equivalent to a declaration that slavery is purely voluntary, in making them responsible for their acts, punishing them for crime. Chief Justice Marshall, in a case where an action was brought to recover damages from the owners of a steamboat, for four slaves who had been drowned while under their care, decided that inasmuch as slaves were not like ordinary property, that they possessed volition and intelligence, then the doctrine of common carrier does not apply to the case of carrying them.—(*Peter's Report*, vol. II, p. 154.)

Shall we multiply words on this point? If slave property be like other property, why have the slave States themselves passed laws to prohibit the importation of slaves into their bounds? Whence that abhorrence with which the planter regards the professional slave-trader? How is it that the slaveholder cannot remove to a free State with his slaves, and hold them there as property?

These considerations are enough to satisfy the rules which apply to property, recognized by the laws of all nations and the common sense of mankind, will not apply to a species of "property" existing alone by the force of municipal law, and in violation of natural right. Therefore it is that the Arkansas or Missouri planter could not hold his slaves on the soil of the new free territory about to be acquired from Mexico, unless by a law of Congress, which, as we have seen, is beyond its constitutional power.

We may resume the subject next week.

2dly. The clause which makes three-fifths of the slave population, part of the basis of representation. It invests Congress with no power, it imposes upon it no responsibility in reference to slavery. It neither sanctions nor condemns the system, unless the reduction of the representative power of the States holding slaves, necessarily resulting from this compromise, involve a virtual disapprobation of it.

3dly. The only remaining compromise respects the reclamation of fugitives from service or labor.

This is no compromise, for the South conceded nothing; the North gained nothing. The whole concession was on the part of the latter. It amounted to an agreement or compact between the States, that no one of them would pass laws discharging from service or labor a fugitive in it from another.

The provision being one against natural right, and also involving sacrifice (without any equivalent) on the part of many of the States, was clearly designed that it should be strictly construed. And such, we have remarked, have been the concurrent decisions of the principal courts in the country. Constrained strictly, however, it confers upon Congress no right, imposes upon it no duty, directly or indirectly, to originate, perpetuate, extend, or destroy slavery; nor is such right or duty, conceded or imposed in any part of the Constitution.

The public sentiment under its influence has been revolutionized to such an extent as to demand that the peace of nations shall not be broken, except for the gravest, most imperative reasons. The reckless tyrant who would wrath a thorough through seas of blood, talk of the calamities of Peace, and affects to lament the dire necessity which caused it.

The Governments of Europe, whatever their dispositions, find it necessary to pay so much homage to Christian civilization, as to deprecate the horrors of war. No Government there is so shameless as to express gratification at the idea or existence of hostilities with another State.

Is republicanism more ruthless than despotism itself? Shall the Democracy of the United States be shamed by the superior civilization of European monarchies? Their institutions are founded upon the fiction of inequality in the natural rights of man, and the superior value of the few, while the interests and rights of the masses are never recognized, as in this country. Our institutions rest upon the assumption that all men are equal in natural rights, and by imposing equal responsibilities on all, they assert the importance of every individual. Certainly, then, in this respect, beyond all other countries, life, property, liberty, should be regarded and protected by peculiar guarantees, and it might be reasonably expected that public sentiment would be signally characterized by its hatred of war, and love of peace.

By this decree, freedom became the universal law in the Mexican territory.

In 1846, large portions of this territory fall by

conquest, under the power of the United States. Possession is temporary. No power is claimed to establish any other government in them than such as may be necessary for the protection of the rights of the inhabitants *under their own laws*. Reason as supreme over Brutal Force, and man revered in human nature a dignity, founded upon its immortality and rights, as sacred as the laws of its Maker.

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For the National Era.
PORTRAITS FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY JOHN SMITH THE YOUNGER.

NO. 1
THE OLD MAN ELOQUENT.
Met. In fact he is a worthy gentleman;
Exceedingly well read.—*King Henry IV.*

In looking down from the ladies' gallery of the pealing bell on a cold frosty morning, and were heard distinctly in the most distant parts of the hall. With what bitter emphasis he dealt forth denunciations, which must, I am sure, have cut somewhere like a two-edged sword! The effect upon the features of his auditors I shall never forget. This was a tall, dark-visaged man—a member—standing on the outside of the circle collected around the speaker. My attention had been arrested by the fixed fierceness of the gaze with which he regarded the old man from the listening crowd. His countenance grew blacker every moment, and, as the speaker became keener and keener in his merciless sarcasm, it assumed an expression so positively demoniacal that I was shocked and startled. A cloak properly arranged, and the glittering of a poniard, would have made the fearful picture complete. But too soon, loudly and heavily the hammer fell, and the old man, cut short in the middle of an impassioned appeal, instantly sunk into his chair, in a sudden and nervous manner, which struck me very disagreeably, and somehow conveyed an unpleasant impression, that the speaker had felt himself sharply rebuked for some gross impropriety. As the venerable speaker assumed his seat, his attentive auditory on the floor quickly dispersed and returned to their places, whilst throughout the hall, in the lobbies and in the galleries, there was a simultaneous and general renewal of the buzz and murmur of conversation, like the breaking forth of waters after the flood-gates have been opened.

The general expression of the House, if one may so speak, is commonplace enough. Intelligence, common sense, and shrewdness, meet your eye in every direction; but the number of strongly marked and striking heads is very small indeed. You are quite sensible, after the first glances, that you are looking upon just such an ordinary assembly as might be made up of a like number of intelligent mechanics, and lawyers in any well-settled district of the Union—that is, always excepting the ill-bred, long-clawed basile and confidante. It is not strange, then, that the eye very soon singles out the subject of the present hurried sketch, and that to all visiting the gallery of the House, whether familiar with his venerable aspect or not, the Old Man Eloquent presents an object of the most honest and respectful regard. But in any congregation of men, the sage would command this attention. His whole aspect wears that unmistakable air which befriends a man distinguished above his fellows. A noble head, almost bald, and white and shining as polished Parian marble—eyes that beam brightly as half a century ago, but serene and clear as a river faint away among the hills—smooth and chin whose every line evinces philosophic dignity and firmness, not unmixed with the gracious benignity of a loving heart—remind us of one of those immortal busts which have familiarized to our thoughts the form in which wisdom dwelt at Athens in the days of her unclouded intellectual glory, and fully assure us that we behold at least one fit representative of a free and sovereign people, in this latter day of more perfect light and liberty.

The last occasion on which the Old Man Eloquent addressed the House is not likely to be soon forgotten. It was on the last night of the session of 1845-1846. The President had sent a message to Congress, asking an appropriation of two millions of dollars, to be placed entirely at the discretion of the Executive, for the purpose, as he declared, of facilitating the negotiation of a peace with Mexico. A great deal of angry and irritating discussion of the subject had taken place in both Houses. The question of slavery—all of subjects that can be debated in these halls, I need hardly say, the most inflammatory—had been thrown into the arena, by the introduction of an amendment to the preamble of a bill, affixed by certain of the party, for the purpose of effecting certain objects aimed at by the Executive; and the feelings of members, on all sides of the House, were excited to the highest pitch. In vain did the Speaker exert himself to preserve the decorum of the House, at all times a difficult task, but now far more arduous, in consequence of the exciting subject under consideration, and the lateness of the hour. The imperfect manner in which the hall was lighted added to the confusion. Some years ago, just a few moments after the House had adjourned, the immense and superb chandelier fell, with a terrible crash, breaking the desks in the centre of the hall into a thousand fragments, and shivering the glass in the windows like a discharge of artillery. The costly article of ornament and use has not been replaced, and, when the House sits at night, the hall is lighted by placing a candle on every member's desk. A somewhat singular effect is thus produced. The hall looks something like a vast market place on a Saturday night, whilst the tumult of tongues does not by any means tend to dispel the illusion. Galleries and lobbies are draped in gloom, and the dim obscure of the vast dome is spread out over all like a mighty pall. All this, however, helps to heighten the effect of the specific illumination to which each concomitant on the floor is subjected. The sickly glare of candlelight falling full upon a human face distorted by pain, certainly does not sweeten the expression; and, on this occasion, the fact was verified in two hundred and fifty instances. It was, indeed, one of the most interesting studies of the human visage, under the peculiar effect of candle-light, on a comprehensive scale, that I ever recollect being favored with, except in the case of a Scottish Presbyterian Synod, engaged at midnight in a fierce discussion averted the duty of the civil magistrate to punish heresy by the sword; in which case, I must admit, the glare appeared still more unearthly, and the general expression still further removed from the angelic.

A noisy, spluttering, diminutive member from some obscure Northern district, who, with hideous grimaces, had been speaking in a sort of dumb-show for the last ten minutes, nobody paying the least attention to him, and his poor, meager, peevish little bit of a voice being utterly lost in the loud bustle of excited and angry conversation throughout the House, the galleries, chiming in with their hoarse sullen roar, had just taken his seat, when there was an instantaneous and蓬勃 cessation of the mingled noises which had pervaded the hall a moment before, whilst a subdued murmur on the floor, and a sudden uprising and shuffling of feet in the galleries signified the occurrence of something unusual. I naturally turned my eyes in the direction of those around me, towards the side of the House where the Old Man Eloquent sits, and found, to my great gratification, that he had arisen, and was about to address the Chair. The old man leaned forward, with both hands upon his desk, and seemed to be more feeble than I had formerly supposed. A great many of the members had left their seats, and stood crowding around, whilst the small gallery to the left of the Speaker's chair, set apart for the short-hand writers, not far from which the old man's desk is placed, was so thronged with eager auditors, who had intruded themselves there in their anxiety to see and hear, that the reporters were squeezed up against one of the massive columns, and those, with note books in their hands, obliged to make what shift they could to discharge their honorable duties. It was a good subject for a picture. They may place less appropriate in either of the vacant panels of the Rotunda! The circling crowd of stalwart, stern-faced men, all agitated by strong interest and emotion—the striking figure of the venerable speaker in the midst, sternly illuminated by the light which seemed concentrated upon him—the fair forms bending anxiously downward from their elevated position over the Speaker's chair, listening anxiously—the throng which filled the large circular gallery seen still further in the distance—the figures slowly moving to and fro in the lobbies and in the dim recesses of the hall, quibbles chafing, and office-seekers, almost goaded to desperation in finding their dreams still unfulfilled at the eleventh hour, and now dead to every thing but their own ill fortune, flitting about like conspirators in the growing darkness, and scowling upon the scene as if it had something to do with their blasted expectations! The Speaker, without an impressive digression, in the midst, sternly illuminated by the light which seemed concentrated upon him—the fair forms bending anxiously downward from their elevated position over the Speaker's chair, listening anxiously—the throng which filled the large circular gallery seen still further in the distance—the figures slowly moving to and fro in the lobbies and in the dim recesses of the hall, quibbles chafing, and office-seekers, almost goaded to desperation in finding their dreams still unfulfilled at the eleventh hour, and now dead to every thing but their own ill fortune, flitting about like conspirators in the growing darkness, and scowling upon the scene as if it had something to do with their blasted expectations!

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The passage of a law authorizing the Treasurer to meet the part of the revenue of the year of 1847, to meet the part of the interest due on the 1st of February, is recommeded.

The increased revenue from taxation under existing laws is estimated at one hundred thousand dollars per annum, based upon the increase in the value of taxable property. This increase, if so much is realized, will furnish a sufficient amount of relief to the State, provided that the new triennial assessment of property fairly made, will then most probably yield a sufficient revenue, the value of property having increased greatly since the last triennial assessment was made.

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THE NATIONAL ERA.

CONGRESS—THE GREAT QUESTION.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7.

Mr. CAMERON's resolution of inquiry, whether the revenue might not be increased by increasing some of the duties of the existing tariff, &c., elicited some debate in the Senate on the 7th, and was then adopted.

A bill, reported by Mr. BENTON, to encourage enlistments in the army of the United States, was taken up, and passed unanimously. In a few remarks before its passage, Mr. CARRINGTON took occasion to say, that, although he deeply deplored the war, he thought the true policy was to push it vigorously to peace was secured, and therefore he would urge all necessary supplies. Such he believed to be the views of both sides in the Senate chamber. No one disagreed from the remark.

The House resolved to close the debate on the army bill, at half past two o'clock, next Saturday; and then resolved itself into Committee of the Whole.

The bill to raise ten additional regiments for the army was taken up. Judge DARGAN addressed the Committee, not on the merits of the bill, but on the demerits of Wilcox's proviso. The Mexican war, he said, was proving a serious matter. No people were so degraded, but if attacked and surrounded, they would fight with desperation. While the army was in the field, our Treasury was nearly exhausted, and the House, with all its patriotism, had refused the tax necessary to replenish it.

The result of this war was the acquisition of territory—but this acquisition brought up another question, vastly more important in its bearings upon the Union than the armies of Mexico. Should fortune prove adverse, we could retreat; but let this question be raised, and there will be no escape from it.

It was the existence of slavery which produced all the feeling recently manifested here in regard to the acquisition of territory.

Mr. DARGAN then proceeded to trace the history of slavery, and characterized it as a providential institution, to be continued or terminated according to the wisdom of an overruling Providence.

The evils attending the system were all borne by the South; its benefits accrued to the North.

The recent demonstrations of the North against the extension of slavery to new territory evinced a purpose to hedge around and limit the South—to destroy the locomotion of slavery. What would result from this in twenty or twenty-five years? He was not willing to risk the consequences. He asked whether there was any member from the free States who was willing to abide by the principle of the Missouri compromise, in this crisis? He paused, but no one replied. Northern gentlemen, then, he said, were unwilling to stand by that compromise.

Mr. VINTON, of Ohio, interposed, and said terms of that compromise expressly confined it to the territory ceded by France; and to that com-
promise. But no matter. Was there not a clause in the Missouri bill, that no man was to stand on that ground?

Mr. DARGAN complimented him, and a member from Virginia shook him cordially by the hand.

Mr. DARGAN spoke of the war in terms of moderation. He had seen from the beginning that it would be the opening wedge to questions far more perilous than the arms of a foreign foe. After the battles of the eighth and ninth of May, he deeply regretted the orders given to the army to cross the Rio Grande. Could he have controlled its movements, he would have brought it back. What was to be gained by revelling in the halls of the Montezumas? He preferred his own ancestral halls. His own policy would be to establish a boundary line between us and Mexico, and then hold on until a treaty could be concluded. He saw no good likely to result from prosecuting the war any further. He presumed not to censure the Administration—but expressed his individual position.

What would be thought by the volunteers from the South, when it was announced to them, that slavery was to be excluded from their territory the day after it had been acquired? This question must be settled before we proceed to acquire more territory, for afterward it will be too late. He was not a hot Southerner—he was esteemed by his friends a cool man—but he would say to his Northern friends, that unless the Missouri compromise gave slavery a safe harbor, it would sink. He reiterated his opinion that a boundary line between us and Mexico, and then hold on until a treaty could be concluded. To what ought this House to direct its attention? To the interest of the South? Not at all. We found California a vast wilderness, almost empty of inhabitants, and closed by all the most influential members of the House, Whig and Democratic, to go together to the President, represent to him the crisis which had come upon us, and concert with such measures as would avert the menacing dangers.

Mr. DARGAN appears to be a good-tempered, amiable man, and his speech was delivered without any excitement.

Mr. SENOOR, of Virginia, followed in a speech on the same subject, which was more remarkable for oratorical pretension than anything else. He looked unutterable things, and spoke with all the solemnity of a hero. He threatened the Union, and warned, exhorted, warned, Northern men to take heed of their ways.

Mr. GROVER, a Democratic member from New York, next addressed the Committee; and, as a specimen of the change that has come over the dreams of the Democracy of the North, we transfer to our columns the report of his speech, given in the National Intelligencer:

"The people of the North, at my rate, had no doubt of their friends in regard to that question. They had only to go to the boundary line which separated slave territory from free, to see at once which of the two to choose?" Indeed, the question might be decided by the admissions of Mr. DARGAN, who addressed the Committee yesterday, spoke very indignantly about the North still lecturing the South about her "deformities" and her "misfortunes." Now, with all deference, Mr. G. must say that it was no such thing. All that the North did was to tell the Southern states not to extract their own "deformities" and their own "misfortunes" to regions which were now free from them. If the South was satisfied, they always said, that the introduction of slavery into their country was a great blessing to them; and what was to be its destiny in future? Now, the Northern gentleman, two days ago, that this was a time which could not be allowed to come; that all lips must be sealed in regard to it; and they had uttered in dolorous notes their solemn warnings that if discussions were further permitted on this floor, the fair fabric of our Union would be ruined.

But this morning quite a different course seemed to have been agreed on. They had themselves introduced the subject. Mr. G. rejected that they had done it; he had not done it. He had said to-day to two gentlemen from the South very freely speaking on the subject of slavery, its origin, and extent, and what was to be its destiny in future. Now, the Northern gentleman, two days ago, that this was a time which could not be allowed to come; that all lips must be sealed in regard to it; and they had uttered in dolorous notes their solemn warnings that if discussions were further permitted on this floor, the fair fabric of our Union would be ruined.

But before he did this, he wished to say a word in relation to the time at which this topic of slavery in the Northern territory would be introduced. A few days ago the House very severe censures had been cast upon his colleague (Mr. King) who had introduced the bill, as well as on another colleague of his (Mr. Gordon), because he had indulged in remarks up to that time. In all that he said, he had not referred to the time in which he had introduced the bill, nor had he said in regard to the time of the introduction of the subject. His colleague had expressed the opinion that the time at which what was familiarly known as "Wilcox's" project was brought forward, he would be in a position to do so. How was not this a contradiction? He had advised the offering of that view; he had supported it when moved; supported it now, and should support it at all times. What had been the circumstances under which it was moved? It was moved because there were no appropriate two millions for the payment of a peace with Mexico. All were desirous of peace; the desire prevailed North, South, East, and West; there was no difference of feeling on that subject. If these two millions should be appropriated, it was very clear that they would be used for the purpose of acquiring by negotiation a certain amount of territory from Mexico. What then? Mr. G. asked. Ought the House to express its opinion whether in the territory to be acquired slavery might or might not be allowed to exist? Could it be very difficult to say, to a Northern man, who was complying with every article of the compromise, and standing shoulder to shoulder with them under all the compromises of the Constitution, that the South would secede unless their

bretren would agree to perpet the Government to the extension of slavery by the admission of free into slave territory? The North never said, "We will not have a Pennsylvania farmer from his cattle into New York sale. Nor could Massachusetts or Connecticut prohibit her citizens from taking out cottons or cloths to sell in other States of the Union."

What plausible excuse could they have even for talking of such a thing? The Constitution did not now embrace these captured Mexican provinces. It was proposed to add them to the Union. Why, you could not bring a citizen of Virginia to sell him slaves." Greater masters was it for told, "then we will dissolve the Union." Was this an appeal to Northern fears? Mr. G. had no fear upon the subject. He had no dread whatever that this glorious Union was to be dissolved, and that it would be a calamity to the South, and closely knit, and it would continue to stand, so long as the North did nothing more than to stand on the floor who could for one moment cherish the purpose of using the power of this Confederacy to convert territory, till these free, into slave territory. The administration got up by the South for the very purpose of extending slavery; that conquests in Mexico would be pushed with a view to plant that institution where it did not then exist. Mr. G. did not believe that the South could not bring him to do this. He could not bring himself to that view that there was a single Representative on the floor who could for one moment cherish the purpose of using the power of this Confederacy to convert territory, till these free, into slave territory. The Northern mind misgave him, to be honest, to do this. He therefore said to his friends, give us a declaratory resolution that you have no such design or object in view, and that it shall not be done. And what had been the result? The South said that to make such a declaration was giving the North a right to interfere with the slaves of those of the portion of the Union, to say whether such a charge was just. They were willing to make their arm in the cause of their country; they were ready to do all that was necessary to defend their country, but they could not engage completely, if they could not go into the contest with all their soul, if consequences were to attach to victory which they most deplored. Mr. G. sought the proviso in order that he might get a more thorough understanding of the bill. A vote had been taken upon the bill, and the bill had been voted down. Mr. King had been willing to give the two millions, and for a peace, but he wanted to satisfy the North that there was no design in its application to extend the limits of slavery.

Mr. BOYD, of Kentucky, here rose, and asked permission to put to the gentleman from New York a question concerning the Missouri compromise.

Mr. GROVER assenting—

Mr. BOYD wished to know whether that gentleman meant to say, and to act out the declaration, that he would not give men and means for that war unless the restriction should be adopted prohibiting the importation of slaves.

Mr. GROVER replied that he had neither said so, nor did he design to say so. He would give his views very frankly on that question. It was to him immaterial what the South might do; the North were to stand by, and they were to stand by the South to destroy the locomotion of slavery. What would result from this in twenty or twenty-five years? He was not willing to risk the consequences. He asked whether there was any member from the free States who was willing to abide by the principle of the Missouri compromise, in this crisis? He paused, but no one replied. Northern gentlemen, then, he said, were unwilling to stand by that compromise.

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What would be thought by the volunteers from the South, when it was announced to them, that slavery was to be excluded from their territory the day after it had been acquired?

Mr. GROVER said to speak *ex cathedra* for the entire South? He had had his colleagues present, and he had been willing to give the entire South a like opportunity.

Mr. GROVER said he meant to speak *ex cathedra* for nobody; but he had expressed his hopes. He was not prepared to speak with entire confidence, but he had done so. He had not been willing to do this, but he had not been willing to do this.

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